



***George Washington & Jefferson National Forests***  
**5162 Valleypointe Parkway**  
**Roanoke, VA 24019**  
**(540) 265-5100**

**Contact: *Forest Supervisor's Office***  
***Phone: (540) 265-5100***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Forest Service Reminds Forest Visitors to be Aware of Winter Driving Conditions**

**Roanoke, Va.** – The U.S. Forest Service reminds visitors to be cautious of driving in winter conditions throughout the national forests. Road conditions in the forest may worsen in the winter months, and can vary from conditions in lower elevation communities. When winter storms arrive, conditions can change in a hurry.

Woody Lipps, Safety Officer for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests advises, “Expect the unexpected. Be mindful of where you are going because conditions in the winter can change rapidly.” Lipps encourages proper vehicle maintenance and carrying emergency kits when visiting the national forests. Emergency kits contain water, food, warm clothing, blankets, flashlights, maps, emergency information, and a cell phone. Tell family or friends where you are going, and what time you will return.

Forest roads are often designed and maintained for seasonal access and become hazardous for all vehicles when covered with snow, including four-wheel drive vehicles. Roads in remote locations are not plowed and may remain covered with snow long after a storm passes through an area. Radio and cell phone communication is limited in many areas of the forest and calling for help may not be possible.

Emergency responders may not be able to reach stranded vehicles in winter conditions. The Forest Service does not have the equipment to remove stranded vehicles, and most roadside assistance companies are unable to gain access. For current forest road conditions and potential closures, contact the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests at (540) 265 – 5100.

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*The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.*